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CITY OF CAMBRIDGE  
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

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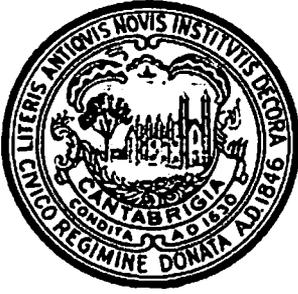
BRIAN MURPHY  
Assistant City Manager for  
Community Development

SUSAN GLAZER  
Deputy Director for  
Community Development

To: Robert W. Healy, City Manager  
From: Brian Murphy, Assistant City Manager for Community Development  
Date: March 1, 2012  
Re: **Bishop, et al. Zoning Petition**

Included are two documents requested by the City Council on February 27, 2012.

1. A copy of the Planning Board recommendation on the originally-filed version of the Bishop, et al. Petition, dated October 18, 2011. After deliberation on January 17 and February 21, the Planning Board chose not to submit a new recommendation on the re-filed petition, since the current petition is identical to its original version.
2. Zoning text of Special District 2 with the proposed Bishop, et al. Petition changes shown as inline edits. This version omits "Part 1" and "Part 1A," which proposed deleting some or all of the allowed non-residential uses in the district.



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS

# PLANNING BOARD

CITY HALL ANNEX, 344 BROADWAY, CAMBRIDGE, MA 02139

October 18, 2011

To the Honorable, the City Council,

**Re: Planning Board recommendation on the Julia Bishop, et al Zoning Petition to amend the Zoning Ordinance, Section 17.20 – Special District 2, to delete some uses currently allowed, decrease allowable development and create fence regulations along Linear Park.**

**Recommendation: The Planning Board does not recommend adoption of the zoning changes proposed in the Petition.**

**Discussion:** The Petition proposes changes to the existing requirements of the Special District 2 (SD-2) zoning district which is primarily located adjacent to Linear Park; along Harvey Street on the south side, and at the terminus of Madison Avenue, Magoun Street, Brookford Street, Cottage Park Avenue, Edmunds Street and Tyler Court on the north side. Historically, the area had consisted of industrial uses adjacent to the former railroad line, which is now Linear Park. Special District 2 was created in 2000 with the intention of encouraging residential uses in the district in a form and density compatible with adjacent residential uses.

The proposed zoning changes would prohibit all commercial uses (with the possible exception of artist studios), reduce the density allowed in the district from a floor area ratio (FAR) of 0.65 to 0.50 FAR, increase the minimum lot area per dwelling unit from 1,800 square feet to 2,500 square feet, establish a maximum height of 35 feet for any portion of a building that is 50 feet or less from another zoning district, and introduce new visibility requirements for fences within the building setback along Linear Park.

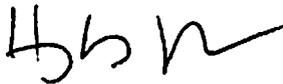
Many of the parcels in and near Special District 2 have been relatively recently redeveloped into residential uses. The few remaining parcels on the north side of Linear Park would be most affected by this zoning change. Among those properties, the former Fawcett Oil site is the largest.

The Board finds no compelling reason to change the Special District 2 zoning requirements, and acknowledges that the current zoning was adopted about a decade ago after extensive discussion at the Planning Board and at City Council involving neighbors and property owners in the area. The Board believes that recent residential projects that have been approved under the current

regulations demonstrate that the current zoning, with the requirement that larger residential projects receive a Townhouse or Multifamily Special Permit, provides an appropriate set of tools to review and improve projects where necessary. Further, although creating and enforcing specific fence regulations is difficult, the design review process allows the Board to consider issues of safety and visual access to open space. The Board is also wary of hindering the original intent of Special District 2 and potentially discouraging the continued transformation of the district to predominantly residential use.

The Board recognizes that there are traffic concerns about any potential new development, especially for residents of the streets that terminate at the district mostly along the former Fawcett Oil site. Sue Clippinger, Director of the City of Cambridge, Traffic, Parking and Transportation (TP&T) Department submitted a memorandum dated October 18, 2011 discussing traffic patterns in the area. Traffic on residential side streets is already very low, and any new traffic generated may be noticeable to residents; however, it is the view of TP&T that the existing streets can accommodate the small increase in traffic that would be generated by a new residential development. Furthermore, it is estimated that the number of potential new trips is only slightly reduced (one or two fewer trips in the peak hours on each of the streets) if the Special District 2 zoning is changed as proposed.

Respectfully submitted for the Planning Board,



Hugh Russell, Chair

Zoning Text of Special District 2  
Including Changes Proposed by the Bishop, et al. Zoning Petition

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The following text includes changes proposed by the Bishop, et al. Zoning Petition. *However, "Part 1" and "Part 1A" of the petition, which propose changes to allowed non-residential uses, are not included in this version.*

Proposed additions and creations are underlined. Proposed deletions are in ~~strikeout~~.

**17.20 SPECIAL DISTRICT 2**

**17.21** *Scope.* This Section regulates development in Special District 2 as shown on the Zoning Map of the City of Cambridge, as amended. Except as herein provided this Section 17.20, all requirements of and regulations applicable to the Residence B District shall apply equally to the Special District 2.

**17.22** *Purpose.* It is the intent of this Special District 2 to encourage the establishment of residential uses in the district in a form and density compatible with the adjacent residential neighborhood. However, given the significant presence of nonresidential uses in the district, provision is made for the conversion of those existing nonresidential uses to other nonresidential uses more compatible with the residential neighbors, with the intent that all nonresidential uses will, over time, be replaced with permitted residential use.

**17.23** *Use Regulations.* The uses allowed in the Residence B district shall be equally allowed in Special District 2 except as modified by the following provisions.

**17.23.1** *Additional Permitted Residential Uses.* Multifamily Dwelling, Section 4.31.g shall be permitted, subject to the special permit requirements for Townhouse development in a Residence B District.

**17.23.2** *Permitted Non Residential Uses.*

**17.23.21** The following nonresidential uses, not otherwise permitted in a Residence B District, shall be permitted as of right in this Special District 2 provided the conditions set forth in Section 17.23.22 are met. Nevertheless, for purposes of the Zoning Ordinance, Special District 2 shall be considered a residential district.

(a) Section 4.34 – Office and Laboratory Use, Paragraph a (medical professional), Paragraph b (nonmedical professional), Paragraph c (agency office), Paragraph d (general office).

(b) Section 4.35 – Retail Business and Consumer Service Establishments, Paragraph q (arts and crafts studio).

(c) Section 4.36 - Open Air or Drive-In Retail and Service, Paragraph a (sale of flowers, garden supplies, and commercial greenhouses).

**17.23.22** The above nonresidential uses shall be permitted to occupy a nonresidential building in existence as of September 1, 1998 provided the current use of the building, if occupied, is any use described in Section 4.34 (office and laboratory use), Section 4.35 (retail business and consumer service establishment), Section 4.36 (open air and drive-in retail and service),

Zoning Text of Special District 2  
Including Changes Proposed by the Bishop, et al. Zoning Petition

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Section 4.37 (light industry) or Section 4.38 (heavy industry). Where the building is unoccupied it may be so occupied with permitted nonresidential uses provided the building has not been occupied by a residential use in the five years immediately preceding the time of application for a certificate of occupancy for the new nonresidential use.

**17.24** *Dimensional Requirements.* The dimensional requirements of the Residence B district shall apply to the Special District 2, except as modified by the provisions set forth below.

**17.24.1** Maximum FAR.

1. The FAR applicable in the Special District 2 shall be ~~0.65~~ 0.50.
2. Notwithstanding the limitations of Paragraph (1) above, where it is proposed to reuse a nonresidential structure in existence as of September 1, 1998 for permitted residential uses, the following Gross Floor Area shall be permitted.
  1. The Gross Floor Area that is the result of the application of the FAR generally permitted in the district, or the existing Gross Floor Area of the structure itself, whichever is greater.
  2. Additional Gross Floor Area may be added to the nonresidential structure without limit provided all construction creating additional Gross Floor Area occurs within the limits of the existing structure.
3. Where it is proposed to demolish an existing nonresidential structure that has a Gross Floor Area greater than that permitted by the application of an FAR of ~~0.65~~ 0.50 for the purpose of converting the site entirely to permitted residential uses, the total Gross Floor Area contained in the nonresidential structure shall be permitted in the new residential structures up to a maximum FAR of ~~0.75~~ 0.50.

**17.24.2** Minimum Lot Area for Each Dwelling Unit.

1. The Minimum Lot Area for Each Dwelling Unit shall be ~~one thousand and eight hundred (1,800)~~ two thousand and five hundred (2,500) square feet.
2. Where it is proposed to reuse a nonresidential structure in existence as of September 1, 1998 for permitted residential uses, the number of units permitted in the structure shall be that number permitted in Paragraph (1) above or that number of units which is the Gross Floor Area of the structure as permitted in Section 17.24.1(2) above divided by one thousand and two hundred (1,200) square feet, whichever is greater.
3. Where it is proposed to demolish an existing nonresidential structure that has a Gross Floor Area greater than that permitted by the application of an FAR of ~~0.65~~ 0.50 for the purpose of converting the site entirely to permitted residential uses, the number of units permitted in the new structures shall be the Gross Floor Area of the structures as permitted in Section 17.24.1(3) above divided by ~~one thousand and two hundred (1,200)~~ one thousand and eight hundred (1,800) square feet.

**17.24.3** Other Dimensional Requirements.

Zoning Text of Special District 2  
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- 1) The provisions of Section 5.53 related to multiple buildings on a lot in Residence B districts shall not apply in Special District 2.
- 2) Where it is proposed to convert an existing nonresidential structure to residential use, and where that structure covers fifty (50) percent or more of its lot, the Minimum Ratio of Private open space to Lot Area may be reduced to the ratio existing on the site at the time of conversion, if any. However, if the land area required for provided parking outside the building, including required setbacks is less than the area of land that has no structure on it, the remainder of the open land shall have any paving material (asphalt, concrete, or gravel) removed, topsoil of a minimum two foot depth shall be added, and the space shall be landscaped with trees, shrubs, and/or grass up to the maximum percentage of the lot required to be Private open space in the Ordinance.
- 3) The maximum building height shall be forty (40) feet with a cornice height not to exceed thirty (30) feet. However, any portion of a building located fifty (50) feet or less from the boundary of any other zoning district with a maximum building height of thirty-five (35) feet or less or from the sideline of a street shall have a maximum height of thirty-five (35) feet.
- 4) Additional Special Permit Criteria. In evaluating applications for Multifamily or Townhouse Special Permits in Special District 2, in addition to the existing criteria set forth in Section 10.47.4, the Planning Board shall also consider as a criterion the development of residential units of various sizes and with various numbers of bedrooms, with specific attention to three and more bedroom units, with the overall goal of providing dwelling units suitable for diverse household sizes.

**17.24.5** Protection of the Linear Park Open Space. Any fences within the building setback of the Linear Park Open Space will be such that sight lines are minimally obstructed. Examples of conforming fences are wrought iron, wire, or chain link. Examples of non-conforming fences are board, stockade, or concrete walls.